

Historic building and congregation honored at Blue Plaque unveiling

Westview Presbyterian Church built in 1930

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OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

WATSONVILLE — The Westview Presbyterian Church on 118 First St. was honored Sunday with a Blue Plaque from the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.

Built in 1930, the church was used as a hostel for returning Japanese evacuees interned by the U.S. government during World War II, but has its origins in 1898, when the beginnings of the Japa-

nese Presbyterian church was established at the Watsonville Japanese Mission Home where members received English lessons, sometimes living quarters and the Gospel message.

The building, which is in the mission/Spanish eclectic architectural style, is the only South County building to receive a Blue Plaque, a historical landmark designation by the

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Westview Presbyterian Church in Watsonville is presented with a Blue Plaque in recognition for its historic significance at a special reception on Sunday. Pastor Dan Hoffman (from left to right), Sam Ichiro Sugidono, Ann Jenkins from the MAH Blue Plaque Committee and Dr. Masako Miura take part in the ceremony.

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Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, this year.

The building was primarily funded by revenue generated at nearby Moses Service Station, built on property donated by Issei Elder H.K. Sakata. During World War II when church members were relocated to Poston, Ariz., the station was leased to Shell Oil Company and before church members returned, the mortgage was paid.

During Sunday's plaque unveiling ceremony, Pastor



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Members of the Westview Presbyterian Church, along with Ann Jenkins from the Blue Plaque Committee of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History and husband Dobie Jenkins, pose for a group picture after the Blue Plaque unveiling ceremony.

'They are a light of love for the community.'

— Dan Hoffman, Pastor at Westview Presbyterian Church

Dan Hoffman said the designation honored not just the building but the people that have been a part of the church family for so many years.

Calling up members of the congregation, Sam Ichiro Sugi-

dono, who served in the U.S. Army 442nd Infantry Regiment while his family was interned during World War II, and Dr. Masako Miura, who provided much-needed medical treatment at two internment camps — at Manzanar and Topaz in

the Utah desert, Hoffman wanted to recognize the contributions made by the local Japanese community in the face of such dire hardship.

"They know forgiveness and they know community," Hoffman said. "They are a light of love for the community."